

*Preservation is Progress
...may we be worthy stewards...*

Chautauqua Historical Society

Volume 3, Issue 3, Number 7

November 2005

- The Newsletter is published three times a year: winter, spring, and fall.
- The Newsletter is a membership benefit at the Piasa Bluffs Assembly (PBA), Patron, and Regular levels.
- **PBA and Patron** levels include a membership in the Chautauqua Network
- CHS members are encouraged to submit articles to the editor for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Feature story starts on page 4.

The building to the left of Summer Rest (top photo) is the Women's Temperance Christian Union (WCTU) House. Both buildings are shown from Alton Street. The images are from 1911 archival documents.



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*We have 8 PBA,
40 Patron, and
3 Regular members,
and send the Newsletter
to 120 households.*

"SUMMER REST."
Women's Christian Home Association, St. Louis, Mo.

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The President's Message

We have so much rich history in our community, and it is always exciting to get new historical information. We received a wonderful

ful gift from Helen Margaret Thatcher last summer. She donated three very old, original photographs of people gathered in front of tents. The photographs are not dated, but these and our old Program Books can offer us a lot of information about boarding and lodging in tents. The Sixteenth Annual Program shows that a 1 x 12 tent could be rented for \$4.50. Tentflys were extra, and a plank floor was \$1.50. Helen Margaret's photographs have been placed in special archival sleeves for protection. These photographs will inspire some exciting projects for next season. A special thanks is also due to Scott Adams for making available two display cases. One case will make a very nice exhibit showcase in the Administration Building.

We have collected many things since Judy Hurd began the Historical Society in 1983. Our old program books, postcards, photographs were in disarray. A group of loyal volunteers met each Tuesday morning during the summer and the fall to organize and place things in archival albums. Kudos to Mary Street, Judy Hurd, Helen Margaret Thatcher, Carolyn Schlansker, Vicki Nemec, Corinne Podesva, Norma Milster and Barbara Russell. Your efforts were special.

We have a fairly complete collection of Program Books and the postcard collection is growing. There is an album of programs and

information devoted to Children's Day, teen and adult plays, as well as the history of the Kentucky Home. None of these albums is complete, but the program books, postcard and pageants and plays have been copied, and these lists are available. We copied Barb Westre's notebook of the *Channels* from 1983 until 1988. They offer a wonderful glimpse of our past. Many thanks to Barbara for loaning us this bit of history. We have many other years of *Channels* to put in order, so this is still a working project. The *Channels* give us a glimpse of our everyday summer activities and help us to remember all the events and people through the years. Beginning next season the *Channels* will contain bits of history taken from the old *Channels*.

There have been so many natural disasters lately that it's made me stop and think. What's happened to the historical records of some of the small towns and cities along the Gulf Coast? Waveland is a small town in Mississippi. Most of the buildings there were destroyed. Are any records left? On a recent visit to the historical society in the mill town of Lawrence, Mass., I learned they preserve all their paper records, and the society has a digital copy of their most important records stored in a safe. Many societies store paper records in museum-safe storage materials and also scan and copy the information onto CDs and DVDs. These are put in a fireproof safe, or even in a local bank vault. Perhaps our Chautauqua Historical Society should consider going one step further in the preservation of our program books and other history on paper. Perhaps the Chautauqua Board of Directors should consider safe digital storage for our very important community records. It's something to think about.

Rose Tomlinson

PRESERVATION IS PROGRESS

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The mission and purpose of the Chautauqua Historical Society is the preservation and enhancement of the historic traditions and culture of New Piasa Chautauqua, Chautauqua, Illinois, the encouragement of historical research on the Chautauqua community and nearby historic districts, the publication of historical brochures, pamphlets, and other written material on New Piasa Chautauqua, remaining permanent assemblies and chautauquas in other parts of the United States and the national Chautauqua movement, and the establishment of an educational program to inform the Chautauqua community and the general public of the historical and educational value of New Piasa Chautauqua.

"A Place for Discovery and Renewal" was used last summer to describe the Chautauqua experience at the Chautauqua Institution (CI) in New York, the site of the 2005 Chautauqua Network annual conference. Ten contemporary chautauquas were represented: Chautauqua Institution (New York), Thousand Island Park (New York), Ocean Park (Maine), Ocean Grove (New Jersey), Monteagle Sunday School Assembly (Tennessee), Lakeside Association (Ohio), Bay View Association (Michigan), DeFuniak Springs (Florida), Waxahachie (Texas), and New Piasa Chautauqua (Illinois). About 30 people were conference delegates.

Dean DeBolt of West Florida State University gave the keynote talk about the Florida Chautauqua. Network sessions were listed as part of the daily program at CI; about 80 people attended this lecture. A major conference theme was how each chautauqua developed a religious element for their season. The Mother Chautauqua has a "house" on the grounds for just about every major Christian denomination. The Catholic house has a small chapel where the Eucharist is present. During my visit, a Jewish wedding was celebrated in the large non-denominational "church." Episcopalians share their chapel with

Catholics for Mass.

There is also an extraordinary commitment to the arts and education at the New York Chautauqua. The annual budget is approximately

\$20 million, of which \$7 million is dedicated to the arts, and to which is added the income from a \$7 million endowment. The Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra performs 22 times over an eight-week period. In my four days I attended two concerts, and also a performance by Lee Greenwood and Crystal Gayle, who thrilled 7000 people for over 90 minutes. CI gives a free daily gate pass to anyone over 90—in 2004 they issued 158 passes. They call this gift "life long learning" for "ever long living."

Next year's Network meeting, held in the last week of July, will be at the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association in Ocean Grove, NJ, on the Jersey Shore. We'll provide more information in the Winter 2006 issue of the Newsletter.

Tim Tomlinson



NPC Board Appoints a New Liaison to CHS

The Historical Society thanks Bob Hormell for serving as the first NPC Board liaison to our organization. Now that Bob has retired from Board service, Chuck Bryant has been appointed to that role. Thanks for accepting this responsibility, Chuck.

Chuck is a "charter" member of the Society, joining in our first official year and renewing each year after since. He is also a very visible part of the

patriotic ceremonies that have been held over the past few years. Chuck is the acknowledged leader of our **Chautauqua Veteran's Flag Detail**. He has done a wonderful job in organizing our former servicemen into an impressive group. These men are important to our July 4th celebration, and particularly important to the raising and retreating of the five military funeral flags that are such an important part of our annual summer program.

The Historical Society provides periodic reports to the NPC Board, and Chuck will make these presentations. The reports are filed with the Board Secretary and become part of the official Minutes of the Corporation. Chuck will also help in the development of Piasa Bluff's Assembly activities, programs that are scheduled in cooperation with the Program Committee. And, because we know from experience that he is a dedicated and hard-working Chautauqua volunteer in so many ways, we are pleased to have him join us in our volunteer efforts.



St. Louis Republic, August 2, 1914

Food and Fun at Only \$3 a Week

Piasa Chautauqua has a bargain sale in fresh air, outdoor sport, improving lectures, fine quarters, wholesome food and Christian influence—for \$3 a week. The St. Louis Women's Christian Association is conducting it. Self-supporting women and their dependent mothers and sisters, however, are the only eligibles. It began July 27 and will continue till September 1.

Factory girl and business woman, seamstress and social worker, teacher and washerwoman, maid and stenographer, all may—and do—rub elbows at "Summer Rest" and get ten times more than their money's worth.

For "Summer Rest" is merely another link in the chain of splendid activities established by the St. Louis Women's Christian Association under the charter granted to them by the Circuit court in 1869, before the city and county became separate units. "The object of this association," says that charter, "shall be to provide for the physical, social, moral and religious wants of industrial women of St. Louis."

Of this band, Mrs. C. R. Springer, 2609 South Grand Avenue, is the only charter member living, but the work of these pioneer women goes on.

Under this charter there have been established a Memorial Home, a Woman's Christian Home, the Blind Girls' Home, Russell Home and White Cross Home Association and the Traveler's Aid Department. To round out the work, a special summer home has, within the last few years, been added to the already splendid chain. "Summer Rest," at Chautauqua, where any woman of good moral character and earning her own living is invited to pass her vacation at the nominal cost of \$3 a week.....

To see how and what (the association is) offering these women was the object of my visit to Piasa Bluffs.

The trip to the Bluffs may be made either by rail or by water. While I chose the former, most of the guests show a preference for the boat, which is more economical and at the same time a more pleasurable way for a tired woman to begin her vacation.

I enjoyed a delightful ride, however, along the river front, on Merchants' Bridge over the mighty Mississippi, through the corn-tasseled river bottoms of our sister state and in the shadow of the mighty bluffs that guard the north banks of the Father of Waters.

It also was educational, in a way, for I passed some of the largest factories and industrial plants in the world, glimpsed a bridge in the building—a long time, alas, in the building—and obtained an idea of houseboat life on the river's cool bosom.

The river teemed with industry. Flag-flying excursion boats, with their merry freight; tubby-looking ferry boats; low-lying sand barges and car-laden transfer boats were everywhere, while fussy little tugs darted through the waters, puffing and whistling with what seemed an absurd appreciation of their own importance. Farther north the picturesque fishing boats, festooned with lines and tackle and manned by phlegmatic professional fishermen, searched the channel for our market supply. Mussel hunters, those hobos of the river, whose only home is a leaky skiff, dotted the upper reaches, never venturing far out into the depths, but skirting the banks, digging and dipping, tearing the shelly mollusk from its gravelly bed, then away for the nearest mussel table, which, as we near the mouth of the Illinois River, rise here and there on the bank.

Did you ever see a mussel table? It is a rude contrivance, usually of iron or zinc, where the hunter pries open the shell and examines carefully the slimy creature within in the hope, which never deserts your true fisher, of finding a pearl. He almost never finds one, but still looks and looks before he gathers up his shells. These he disposes of to the button-houses, whence they emerge full-fledged pearl buttons.

"Summer Rest" is a large cool-looking four-story building on one of the choicest avenues of the Chautauqua grounds. Built about three years ago for a summer hotel, now painted in white and



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touched plentifully in reddish brown, "Summer Rest" is literally "Unter der Linden," through whose waving green canopy we see the swirling waters on their way to the Gulf.

In architectural design, "Summer Rest" follows the most approved style of hot-weather homes with roomy, well-screened verandas on each floor. The front piazza is outfitted invitingly with lawn benches and settees, roomy rockers and cool steamer chairs. At a well-appointed writing desk I found a young woman busily studying the fall styles in hats. She was a millinery trimmer, she told me, who soon would depart for one of the larger Oklahoma towns to build hats for the belles of the wheat lands.

Several of the guests were enjoying a social chat over their fancy work, just as do their sisters at Weque or Mackinac. One girl was embroidering a pink crepe tea jacket; another crocheting, a third cross-stitching a blue scarf, while the fourth was decorating towels with an effective, high padded "B" in white embroidery.

"Summer Rest" seems to be in the center of a colony of St. Louisans; "The Maples," Mrs. Emma Kupferle's attractive new bungalow, is immediately adjoining; William E. Caulfield's "Wee-ta-moo" is across the street, likewise "Alle-Quippa Lodge," belonging to A.N. Lewis; the G.V.A. Mechlin's cottage, "Onatoga" is close by. Near neighbors are the George H. Broeders, of Wagoner Place, at "Brown Gables," Christian Bernet, president of Chautauqua, and his family at "Log Cabin," and Mrs. L. C. Haynes, whom I saw on the porch at "Igloo," only a short distance away.

In the living room an excellent likeness of Mrs. Mary E. Culver attracted my attention. It was Mrs. Culver's gift of \$2,000 which made possible the purchase of "Summer Rest." Across the hall from the living-room is the dining room, an immense chamber with windows on three sides to let in a full supply of that far-famed valley breeze. When the big bell sounded its dinner call, the millinery catalogue was dropped and the embroidery laid aside. The girls all seemed to welcome its peals. Girls from the tennis courts and girls from the croquet grounds came trooping in; girls gathered from the river and from the auditorium, around the two large

tables. Those tables looked inviting. The fresh, crisp linen, the neat hotel china, the sparkling glassware, the plain plated small furnishing all seemed to be calling us. "Thank goodness," from the fat girl, "no lunch boxes today." It must have been a relief to her to see this well-appointed dinner table after a year-long nightmare of lunch boxes and soggy, uninviting sandwiches.

Like in the days of the good, old-fashioned boardinghouses, everything was on the table when we sat down. There were inviting looking platters of prettily sliced veal, vegetable dishes piled high with snowy mashed potatoes; asparagus on toast and rolls steaming hot from the range over, a recent gift of the Culvers. There was good butter, and plenty of it, and a tasty tomato and green pepper salad. Then there was a dainty pudding, rice custard and a choice of coffee, iced ea or milk. Most of us preferred milk, which was sweet and rich, fresh



contemporary view, photo by Tim Tomlinson

from an adjoining farm. We thought it an excellent dinner and most of us showed our appreciation by taking a second helping of everything. I know I devoured three hot rolls and even then there were plenty more.

After dinner we had music. The girls' repertoire proved varied, ranging from "There is a Happy Land," to "Too Much Mustard." Next year there will be no piano. Mrs. Bider, the matron at "Summer Rest," is of diversified ability. During the school year, she presides over the primary department of the Farmington Public School, and this year she has developed into a piano saleswoman. That's why "Summer Rest" will have

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no piano next summer. Mrs. Bider has sold it to a neighboring farmer.

Upstairs are the bedrooms, all fair-sized and high ceilinged, each with a double bed and a cot. The springs and mattresses are good, as are the bed-clothes. I noticed each bed boasts a blanket, which the girls told me, always was put into service toward morning. On the floor were old-timey rag carpets, hit or miss pattern, the handiwork of the good women of the association.

“Summer Rest,” like all the cottages on the Chautauqua grounds, is piped and served with spring water. On each floor is toilet and bath, and, much to my surprise, baths are not numbered among the “extras,” as in most summer resort hotels.

Miss Betty Boyd was a feature writer/reporter for the *St. Louis Republic* in the early 1910's, and this article was published on Sunday, August 2, 1914. NPC's leasehold files indicate the first leasehold for what became “Summer Rest” was given in 1893 to Elizabeth Gardiner of nearby Kane, Illinois, in exchange for lot 178. The Women's Christian Association probably bought the property in 1910 or 1911. Before that purchase it consisted of four lots occupied by a hotel or boardinghouse run by a Mrs. Roades. “Summer Rest” opened in June 1911. WCA sold the building in 1951. For most of 1968-69 it was owned by NPC, and sold to Sam Schmidt's parents, Paul and Lucille, in October 1969. Another WCA facility in St. Louis, Beauvais Manor, still exists near Tower Grove Park. The original of this article is part of the Jacoby Collection of Chautauqua materials, in the custody of and curated by the Elsah Village Museum.

The windows and porches are well screened. Indeed, the little Cabanne avenue chap, who begged to come back to St. Louis after seeing the fly-trap containing the 2000 flies that were caught in the kitchen of his New York State summer quarters, would have no cause to dread visiting “Summer Rest.”

On the porches are hammocks and cots, which we can enjoy at any hour of the day or night.

Portable clothes-horses adorn the top porch upon which we dry our bathing suits after our hour at the pool. How quickly my afternoon passed I can't begin to tell you.

I heard Dr. B. D. S. Whyllie of the Department of hygiene of the St. Louis Public Schools give an interesting half hour to the “Ethics of Child-Raising.” Then it was suppertime—and maybe we weren't glad to hear that big bell again. How we did enjoy that cold meat and that potato salad; How we lit into those sliced peaches and played havoc with the chocolate cake! And how cool and refreshing that creamy milk and iced tea!

I forgot my manners and remarked to my neighbor: “How good everything tastes!” She came right back: “Just you wait till you eat a breakfast or two; cereal, bacon and eggs, with hot biscuits. Take it from me. Mrs. McCollough is one dandy cook.”

After breakfast there was family prayer in the living room, not obligatory, however, for there seemed to be very few rules governing the community, but I noticed all the girls attended. A hymn, a verse or two from the Good Book and a short prayer, and then we sang, “God Be With Us Till We Meet Again,” as several of the girls were going home, their vacations over, and sweet sentiment prompted the song.

These girls had spent previous vacations at “Summer Rest.” New friendships were made and old ones cemented. They promised to return next year and took themselves off, back to the daily grind of business life, younger and fresher and brighter for the two weeks they had spent—the Rest.

There is always room for fifty guests at “Summer Rest,” and, I dare say, if more were to come, Mrs. Rider would find some way of taking care of the increase. Anyhow, for the lucky fifty I can guarantee a royal good time.

Betty Boyd

“The Maples,” owned by Mrs. Kupferle, is still called that and is the Adams cottage. Caulfield's “Wee-ta-moo” and the Lewis “Alle-Quippa Lodge” were duplex units, now the Donnelly's cottage. Broeder's “Brown Gables” is the Kirsch cottage, and the Mechlin's “Onatoga” is the Podesva cottage, now “Wigwam.” The Haynes cottage, referred to as “Igloo,” was probably on the site of the present Schulenburg cottage.

Pacific Palisades and the Chautauqua Influence in Southern California

When the Chautauqua movement originated in 1874 on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in southwestern New York State, the vision of the founding fathers was one of a national movement in which the Chautauqua Assemblies would challenge the minds and spirits of their participants by offering seasonal programs of lectures, music, elocution (public speaking) and open discussion of public issues, literature and science. In 1874, nine years after the Civil War ended, their vision as a national movement took them as far west as St. Louis and possibly Denver. Little or no thought was given to the "wild west" of California, which only 25 years earlier experienced the first Gold Rush.

Little attention was given to a California Chautauqua until a Methodist Episcopal minister moved from the East with his family and settled in Southern California in the late 1800s. Rev. Charles Holmes Scott (1872-1952) brought the vision of the Chautauqua Movement to Southern California, dreaming of establishing a community which would serve "all religious and educational bodies and that no individual would profit from the enterprise." Beginning in 1910, under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Scott supervised the committee that was to establish a new religious community in Southern California. Thus began the town known as Pacific Palisades, California (referred to simply as "Palisades"), located ten minutes from the Pacific Ocean with the famed Sunset Blvd. acting as its main street. Rev. Scott and the founders pictured Palisades "as a wonderful bedroom community where every summer they would host an assembly that thousands of people from across the state would attend."

Within the Palisades city limits (in Temescal Canyon), Rev. Scott developed what is now Temescal Canyon Gateway Park as a West Coast center of the Chautauqua movement. With funding from the Methodist Episcopal Church and several private donors, the canyon entrance and valley soon sported a 1600 seat auditorium, a cafeteria, thirty-five small cabins or "casitas" and some two hundred framed tents for families to rent during the season. A tent for two cost \$6 for seven days and many of the tents had multiple rooms and came with their own kitchens. A grocery store and meat market supplied provisions for the campers.

The first Chautauqua and Summer Assembly began on July 11, 1922. (It is interesting to note that in 1922, our New Piasa Chautauqua was enjoying its 37th season.) The two-week program began each morning with a welcome by Rev. Scott and offered a series of courses including religious studies, the educational value of play, decorative arts, pionalogues, and story telling. Each evening ended with a final concert at 8 p.m. Thousands of assembly campers flocked to Temescal Canyon to hear the best minds and the finest performers of their day.

Unfortunately, economic difficulties and the Great Depression virtually ended California's Chautauqua Movement. What was a brief, shining star in the history of the Movement ended and the property was sold to the Presbyterian Synod in 1943. (The property was then used as a private retreat center until it was purchased by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in 1994. Today the Canyon and Park offer miles of canyon hiking with wonderful views of the Pacific Ocean, the city of Palisades and the Santa Monica Pier. It also provides access to the Will Rogers State Park where more hiking, mountain biking, polo and other recreation opportunities are offered. Kathy and I live about 15 minutes from the park and have had a great time hiking some of the more than 50 miles of mountainous trails!)

Only a few traces of the original Chautauqua Assembly remain today in the Temescal Canyon Gateway Park. The original grocery store/meat market today serves as the State Park's visitor center and store. In the building there are old photos and documents on display telling the story



and dreams of Rev. Scott. The above photo shows me standing at an original stage made out of tree

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trunks and planks. The stage is set against a cliff and measures about 30 feet wide and 15 feet deep.

More history is available through the city of Pacific Palisades Historical Society. Besides Chautauqua Avenue, pictured with Rose Tomlinson in the spring 2005 edition of the Newsletter, there are other interesting tidbits that remain. For example, the city of Palisades, now one of the "high end" places to live in the Los Angeles area because of its location and oceans views, was originally laid out by Rev. Scott and the committee with very small lots, in anticipation of a major tent city. Today these small lots remain, but instead of tents they have mini-mansions rising on them, each valued in the multi-millions and many housing movie stars and other media executives.

It is also interesting to note that the historic Pacific Coast Highway (US1), known to Californians simply as "The PCH," once bore the name of "The Chautauqua Highway" between Redondo Beach and Pacific Palisades between 1922 and 1935—a distance of about 25 miles.

Chautauqua and Los Angeles, California—two names that on the surface seem to be worlds apart, but a little digging into the past has proven them to be closer together. A Chautauqua influence in Southern California; who would have believed it?

Paul Brammeier

References: *The Los Angeles Times*: May 22, 2005; *The Los Angeles Times*: July 22, 2005; The Redondo Beach Historical Society; The Pacific Palisades Historical Society; and Temescal Canyon Gateway Conservancy

We thank Paul for developing this article on one of the California chautauquas. We asked Mrs. Betty Lou Young, a wonderfully gifted and articulate Chautauqua "networker," to review the article, and we are anxious to have Paul and Kathy Brammeier get together with Betty Lou, who lives near them in LA. Betty Lou has done extensive research on the western chautauquas—remember, our forbears wrote and described our community as "The Western Chautauqua—and we hope at some point Mrs. Young will share her knowledge with us in an article written for our Newsletter. I met her again last summer at the Network Conference in New York, and she is indeed a lovely and engaging lady.

Tim Tomlinson, editor

IRS Recognition of Exemption

We finally did it. October 25, 2005 is the postmarked date of the submittal of the Society's *Application for Recognition of Exemption* under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. At the same time we made application for *educational registration as an Illinois Non Profit Corporation* with the Attorney General of Illinois, and for a *Sales Tax Exemption Number* with the Illinois Department of Revenue.

The Manual for the IRS application (Publication 557, IRS) provided clarification for questions we had about our status as a tax-exempt organization. For example, the IRS allows any organization normally having annual gross receipts of not more than \$5,000 and conducting activities and programs such as the ones we sponsor to behave as if it had tax-exempt status, even without applying formally. We were not satisfied with this status/position, and determined to have a specific ruling.

As of now, according to IRS rulings, we have tax-exempt status as of October 25, 2005, and can behave as a tax exempt organization until our application has been processed and a final ruling has been provided.

The Directors will be discussing over the next several months how to provide members with tax exempt information. For example, are the total of member's dues tax deductible, or does the Newsletter have a specific monetary value and should that value be deducted from the dues total prior to declaring the remainder tax deductible? We'll be raising the questions and looking for answers.

A copy of the application (including the segments related to the Illinois Attorney General and Department of Revenue) has been filed in the Society's Archives, and a second copy will be placed in the community library for review by any and all interested parties. We think Chautauquans, CHS members and non-members alike, will be interested in the lengthy narrative submitted as part of the application. It provides a good history of our organization.

Kathy Brammeier, who also helps with the Newsletter, was invaluable in providing advice and direction in the application process. She got answers to several critical questions about definitions, using contacts in legal circles who were familiar with the application process. Thanks, Kathy; we appreciate your input.

